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Go

[Home](#) [Contact](#) [Site Map](#) [Search](#) [Help/Info](#) [Your First Stop](#)


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[Region](#)
[Nation & World](#)
[Elections](#)
[Sports](#)
[Business](#)
[Education](#)
[Health & Fitness](#)
[Living](#)
[Parade Magazine](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Opinion](#)
[AP Update](#)

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[Big Red Page](#)
[HS SportsZone](#)
[Midlands Golf](#)
[Changing Omaha](#)
[More News Extras](#)

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[Archives](#)
[Info Center](#)
[Subscriptions](#)

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[Going Out](#)
[Movie Listings](#)
[TV Listings](#)
[Restaurant Guide](#)

Metro

» [MAIN](#)» [21-Day Archive](#)

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Bluffs to offer accident reports online

BY JULIE ANDERSON

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

COUNCIL BLUFFS - Someone rear-ended your car.

You're OK, but you've got a long checklist: Contact your insurance company, get the bumper fixed, pick up a copy of the accident report at the police station.

Beginning around May 1, motorists involved in accidents in Council Bluffs can scratch that last item.

The Council Bluffs Police Department plans to begin offering access to accident reports over the Internet.

The change will offer more convenience, at a price. The cost of getting an accident report will double, to \$10.

"It's going to be a real nice convenience not only for the Police Department but for citizens, not to mention insurance companies," Sgt. Patrick Norris said.

It has taken one clerk's time just to handle requests from insurance companies - first the reports, faxing them off and billing for them.

The department plans to contract with PoliceReports.US, in Mooresville, N.C., to provide the online service.

Once the new system is in place, users will be able to go to the site at [, click on Council Bluffs and request an accident report by report number, accident date, driver's name or accident location. The department's Web site eventually will have a link to the site.](#)

The requested report will pop up, and users can print it from their computers

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said Steuart Watson of Omaha, the company's co-owner and vice president.

Users will have to pay for the reports with a credit card over a secure connection. Insurance companies can set up an account.

On average, he said, each accident report is distributed 2.25 times, going to 1 motorist and insurance companies, even chiropractors.

The Council Bluffs City Council last week increased the fee for all police reports from \$5 to \$10.

Of the \$10, the Police Department will get \$7.50. The vendor will receive \$2.50 and pay the credit card access fee for each transaction.

Crime reports would not be available for now.

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